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RUSSIA'S MILITARY DOCTRINE  
AND THE  
INTERNAL USE OF MILITARY FORCE

by

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## ABSTRACT

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On 11 December 1994, President Boris Yeltsin gave the order for the Russian Federation Armed Forces' invasion of the self-proclaimed independent state of Chechnya. The intent was to gain control of an internal conflict and ensure the integrity of the Federation with a quick, decisive victory. What was to be a short term military action to achieve this intention, however, developed into a protracted conflict that continues to draw national and international criticism toward Russia.

This paper covers the conflict in Chechnya relevant to Russia's current military doctrine, use of force, and Armed Forces' capability to achieve success and provides implications resulting from the analysis. Some correlation is drawn between Russia's use of force to conduct operations internal to state borders and peacekeeping operations conducted within the region that includes former Soviet Union states. The intent is to provide an awareness of the problems Russia faces with balancing use of force with the capability of the force to achieve success. The intent is also to portray Russia's need for an improved process to selectively commit forces, for military reform, and to decrease the inclination to use force as the primary means for resolving conflict.

## INTRODUCTION

On 11 December 1994, President Boris Yeltsin gave the order for the Russian Federation Armed Forces' invasion of the self-proclaimed independent state of Chechnya. The intent was to gain control of an internal conflict and ensure the integrity of the Federation with a quick, decisive victory. What was to be a short term military action to achieve this intention, however, developed into a protracted conflict that continues to draw national and international criticism toward Russia. This paper will examine the conflict in Chechnya relevant to Russia's current military doctrine, the use of force, and Armed Forces' capability to achieve success and provide implications resulting from the analysis. The intent of the paper is to provide an awareness of the problems Russia faces in balancing the use of force with the capability of the force to achieve success. Some correlation will be drawn between Russia's use of forces to conduct operations internal to state borders and peacekeeping operations conducted within the region that includes former Soviet republics. The first section describes what the military doctrine contains that is applicable to the Chechen conflict. The section includes a description of the purpose and general tone of the doctrine, perceptions of military threat, and military roles and tasks to counter perceived threats. The second section presents aspects of Russia's internal use of military force with a perspective on Russia's propensity to use force as a means to resolve conflict. Russia's reasons for the use of military force to protect vital interests and President Yeltsin's centralized decision to commit regular armed forces are provided. Timing of the decision regarding force planning, preparation and implementation and international impacts related to the decision are discussed. The use of force in Chechnya and the 'near abroad'<sup>1</sup> are also presented. The third section provides a description of the conditions of the Russian Armed Forces and the impacts which Chechnya has had on the military. The Chechen experience suggests a limited capability of the Armed Forces to achieve success in combat operations. The conflict also provides insights on Russia's progress toward military reform and ability of forces to honor commitments placed on it by

Moscow's leadership. The last section provides some implications based on Russia's commitment of forces into Chechnya to include some correlation to the commitment of forces in peacekeeping operations. Implications concerning Russia's military doctrine, propensity to use military force to resolve conflicts, the Armed Forces' capability to conduct non-traditional or conventional operations, and international impacts are discussed. The intent is also to portray Russia's need for an improved process to selectively commit forces, for military reform, and to decrease the inclination to use force for resolving conflict.

## RUSSIAN MILITARY DOCTRINE

In some ways, Russia's Military Doctrine has developed and changed from its previous Soviet, Cold War doctrine to one which recognizes internal, regional and global changes. In other ways, the doctrine has retained traditional Soviet thinking in spite of these changes. Gaining some appreciation of the doctrine is prerequisite to a better understanding of Russia's stated vital interest, threats to those interests, and the role of the military to protect them. Understanding the doctrine also helps to distinguish between what Russia communicates to the world in written or verbal form and what it actually does to verify or discredit the doctrine. Russia's current military doctrine is found in The Basic Provisions of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, decreed into law on 2 November 1993. Its purpose is to provide current state views on: (1) the prevention of wars and armed conflicts; (2) organizational development of the military and countermeasures to threats directed against the state's military security; (3) the requirements of the Armed Forces and the nation to prepare for war, and (4) the utilization of the Armed Forces and other troops for the defense of the state's vital national interests.<sup>2</sup> The Military Doctrine is a corollary of the overall security concept of the Russian Federation and is directly linked to the state's Foreign, Military, and National Security Policies. It provides guidance for the employment of Russian Armed Forces and other troops in

accordance with the Constitution, the laws (such as Law on Defense and Law on Peacekeeping) and other normative acts.<sup>3</sup> The military doctrine for the first time in decades focuses primarily on national vital interests as opposed to ideological interests of the state.<sup>4</sup> The doctrine, with respect to this paper, expresses the state's attitude toward the use of military force to achieve political objectives. It addresses internal and external threats and defines the tasks of the Armed Forces and other troops for containing or repelling internal and regional aggression in response to those threats.

There have been differing views among Russian analysts concerning the tone and orientation of the written language of the doctrine. Some analysts feel it reflects Russia's recognition of the political, economic, social and military constraints resulting from the dissolution of the former Soviet Union and does not imply a return to objectives of regional hegemony or global domination.<sup>5</sup> Other analysts view the current doctrine as more offensive, expressing increased tones of intimidation over earlier draft versions.

The doctrinal language refers to the recognition of international laws, the defensive nature of the armed forces and implicit goals for political control over the military. It also expresses cooperation and commitment to averting war and armed conflicts and the elimination of military blocs. In addition, the doctrine affirms Russia's determination to promote ideals of humanism, social progress, universal security and peace stating: "The Russian Federation is committed to the principles of the peaceful settlement of international disputes, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, noninterference in their internal affairs, inviolability of stable borders and other universally recognized principles of international law, [and] regards no state as its enemy."<sup>6</sup>

Analysts who emphasize the offensive notions of the doctrine provide examples where the language of the doctrine has significantly shifted more toward an offensive tone over the emphasized defensive tone expressed in earlier draft versions. The doctrine cites, "The suppression of the rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests of citizens of the Russian Federation in foreign states"<sup>7</sup> as an

external source of military danger. This suggests that the perceived ill treatment of Russians abroad can constitute an excuse for war.<sup>8</sup> The doctrine also expresses implicit measures of unity within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) with Russia clearly dominating. Emphasis is placed on the establishment of mobile forces. These could be oriented on armed intervention or training for a higher level of hostility as opposed to a force capable of reacting to national internal requirements. The doctrine specifically states a requirement to deploy soldiers outside the borders of the Russian Federation that could facilitate control over the developments in their host countries. The doctrine also expresses a mix of offensive and defensive action to destroy the enemy as opposed to purely defending her borders. Retaining a mass mobilization capability to transition industry and society to a wartime footing and an emphasis on committing resources to field world class weaponry is also contained in the doctrine.

The doctrine has an underlying suggestion for maintaining the traditional Soviet tendency toward the preparation for the worst case scenario of full scale, protracted war by sustaining a massive Armed Forces. There is emphasis on the preparation for conventional war and maintenance of conscription to include extension of obligations. The doctrine also states the requirement for "shaping of citizens of moral and psychological readiness to protect the fatherland [and] to ensure the mobilization readiness of the economy and creation of state mobilization reserves."<sup>9</sup> It also makes reference to ensuring potential to build-up the combat might of the Russian armed forces and other troops in keeping with the increases in military threat. These examples suggest the maintenance of a major offensive capability compared to concentrating efforts toward strictly defending the state within its own borders.

There are shortfalls in the doctrine and the language in several sections is ambiguous or incomplete. Specifically regarding Russian Federation policy concerning Chechnya and the 'near abroad', "there is no consideration in the doctrine of the military's role in crisis management and



nothing at all on conflict termination."<sup>10</sup> The doctrine does not outline considerations for deciding when and how to commit Armed Forces in response to a crisis. Failure to integrate a decision-making process that considers key criteria prior to the commitment of forces may have contributed to President Yeltsin's failure to weigh all the alternatives and risks associated with the Chechnya decision.

### Characteristics of the Threat

Russia's military doctrine identifies a wide range of potential threats to the Russian Federation. The doctrine identifies sources of danger to the state and categorizes them as internal and external threats. Although regional external threats may be construed as the most dangerous to the national interests of Russia, the doctrine implicitly recognizes that they are the least likely to occur.

Russia's immediate border with the area that Russia refers to as the 'near abroad' has become increasingly important regarding issues of national security. The breakup of the former Soviet Union resulted in 23 inter-republic borders, with all but two being disputed. Many sectors of the Russian Federation state border have not been properly determined in treaty form. Over 160 different territorial-ethnic disputes contribute to the instability of this region.<sup>11</sup> The most likely threat, external to Russia's borders, may be the instability or actual conflict caused by territorial-ethnic disputes in these areas contiguous to the Russian Federation. The successor states to the former Soviet Union continue to develop their own identities, with some following Russian leadership and others striving for complete independence from Russia's dominance and influence.

Russia makes reference in the doctrine to her allies, particularly regarding military technology cooperation, the deployment of forces beyond the Russian Federation borders, and the development of a system of bilateral and multilateral agreements to establish an overall collective security structure. The Treaty on the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Collective Security signed in

Tashkent on 15 May 1992 is the most significant example. By 1993, Russia had close to 250 various agreements of cooperation with CIS member states.<sup>12</sup> What Russia cannot achieve through multilateral agreements will be pursued with bilateral agreements such as those with CIS members concerning forward deployed forces and peacekeeping operations in the 'near abroad'. These agreements help enhance Russian Federation hegemony in the region. According to the doctrine, any introduction of foreign troops in these areas constitutes a threat to the Russian Federation.<sup>13</sup>

The military doctrine specifically focuses on Russia's direct concern for the constitutional rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens of the Russian Federation in foreign states. This implicitly includes 25 million ethnic Russians living outside the Russian Federation borders. One example is the number of ethnic Russians living in Latvia, 34 percent of that country's population. The Baltics also continue to impose unacceptable conditions on the Russians remaining in the area.<sup>14</sup> Any suppression of these recognized rights constitutes a threat to the Russian Federation according to the doctrine. This has been one of the major Russian justifications for involvement in peacekeeping operations within the 'near abroad'. The doctrine makes it apparent that Russia regards the Former Soviet Union and non-Soviet Warsaw Pact countries as being within the Russian Federation's sphere of influence<sup>15</sup>

Aggressive nationalism continues to contribute to the instability of the region while threatening the unity and cohesion of the Russian Federation itself. The integrity of the Federation is also at risk as the power and authority of Russia's central government continues to deteriorate. Critical to Russia's survival is the suppression of "Illegal activity by nationalist, separatist, or other organizations that is aimed at destabilizing the situation in the Russian Federation or violating its territorial integrity and which is carried out using armed violence."<sup>16</sup> Chechnya's self-proclaimed independence amplifies this as a major threat to Russia's integrity with growing fears that other members of the Federation may attempt to follow Chechnya's example in seeking sovereignty. The doctrine, for the first time,

has raised the domestic and 'near abroad' threats to a level equal to those which might arise in the 'far abroad'.<sup>17</sup> As a result, the current military doctrine specifies additional roles for the Russian Federation Armed Forces in countering these threats.

### Role of the Military

In addition to the traditional tasks to be implemented by the Armed Forces as set forth by Russian military doctrine, for the first time, non-traditional tasks were introduced into the 1993 doctrine. Army General Pavel Grachev, Russian Federation Minister of Defense emphasized these new tasks in an article he wrote for a Moscow newspaper. The first and foremost task is carrying out peacekeeping operations in alignment with decisions by the UN Security Council and other collective security organizations. Peacekeeping can also be conducted under other international commitments providing they do not contradict Russian Federation interests.<sup>18</sup> One example is Russia's contribution in accordance with the UN agreement for conducting peacekeeping operations in the Former Yugoslavia alongside of NATO Forces. Other examples are Russia's commitment of troops, as in Tajikistan, under the CIS Treaty on Collective Security, and bilateral agreements as those Russia has signed with Georgia and Moldova.<sup>19</sup>

The second new task described in the doctrine is to "assist internal affairs organs and internal troops of the Russian Federation Ministry of Internal Affairs in localizing and blocking regions of conflict, ending armed clashes, and disengaging opposite sides..."<sup>20</sup> Also included is the defense of strategically important installations. This provision in the doctrine provides the juridical basis for the use of armed forces in resolving internal conflicts within the borders of Russia. This use of force was actually demonstrated in the Ossetia-Ingushetia conflict and the events of October 1993 in Moscow before the doctrine became law.<sup>21</sup>

The doctrine specifically states that it is the responsibility of the Interior Troops and Border Guards to deal with internal threats. In peacetime, Internal Troops have strictly defined roles within their respective areas not associated with the conduct of combat operations against heavily armed forces. Although internal troops have generally been located behind combat formations of federal troops during the Chechnya Campaign, conditions often forced them to conduct equivalent combat tasks of disarming insurgents, fighting them behind federal troop positions.<sup>22</sup> This has resulted in an increased tendency to rely on regular forces to substitute or augment these 'other troops'.

### Military Tasks

The tasks required to successfully accomplish missions that apply to internal and peacekeeping roles have had impacts on the military. Peacekeeping tasks are similar, in some cases identical, to tasks assigned to Internal Troops or Border Guard Troops. It is important to understand the tasks given in the doctrine to Internal and Border Guard Troops since the Armed Forces also are essentially required to accomplish all of them. Internal Troops are tasked to localize the conflict area and be capable of suppressing armed clashes. They are also tasked to disarm and eliminate illegal armed forces and confiscate weapons from populations in the conflict area. In addition, Internal Troops are tasked to strengthen protection of public order and security in areas adjoining the conflict area.<sup>23</sup>

Border Troops and Internal Troops are required to perform tasks of safeguarding the passage and return of peacekeeping forces within the confines of the Russian Federation state border. The Border Guard troops, in addition to serving the state border, assist law enforcement organs in the struggle against organized crime, terrorism and the smuggling of weapons and narcotics. They also prevent internal armed conflicts from extending beyond the confines of the Russian Federation. In addition, all forces must be prepared to provide assistance to help populations eliminate consequences of accidents, catastrophes and natural disasters. The doctrine is explicit in outlining tasks to the

Armed Forces, Internal and Border Guard Troops. However, regarding internal conflicts only, each force has a requirement to be prepared to accomplish the tasks of the other.

Generally, the only mission the Russian Federation Armed Forces may be given different from the Internal Troops or Border Guards is that of peacekeeping outside the Russian Federation.<sup>24</sup> However, both internal and peacekeeping operations require separation of conflicting parties and blockading the conflict area. When assigned peacekeeping operations, Armed Forces will also be capable of ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilian populations and their evacuation from the conflict zone. Their tasks are aimed at creating conditions that ensure the political settlement of the armed conflict.

At the lower tactical level, the tasks become more similar regarding execution of these missions. For example, to conduct their respective tasks, all forces generally must be able to establish checkpoints, conduct searches, provide for self defense, conduct convoy operations, conduct patrols, separate belligerents and guard terrain or facilities, to name just a few. These tasks are very manpower intensive. They require clear, understandable orders, especially regarding constraints or limitations as when rules of engagement are applied. These tasks must be precisely drilled in small units to achieve success and require extreme proficiency on the part of small unit leaders (platoon commanders and sergeants). Commanders must be capable of planning, commanding and synchronizing a multitude of tasks being conducted simultaneously throughout an area of operation. Conflict areas are often non-linear and non-contiguous, and they require maximum resources to ensure security of the force.

The new military doctrine provides the guidance for use of force to protect vital Russian Federation interests. It identifies the sources of threat and the roles and tasks assigned to the Armed Forces and other troops to counter those threats. Russia's propensity to use force and the Armed

Forces' capability to successfully fulfill the roles and accomplish the tasks impact on the credibility of the doctrine, the Armed Forces and the Russian Federation.

### INTERNAL USE OF MILITARY FORCE

The commitment of Armed Forces into Chechnya and the initiation of peacekeeping operations in the 'near abroad' become important from the perspective of looking at Russia's propensity to use force to resolve internal and regional crisis'. What is so vital to Russia interests to require it to commit forces? In particular to Chechnya, why did President Yeltsin wait so long after Chechnya's declared independence to take action? Why, after waiting three years, could not enough time be allocated to weighting all the alternatives and risks associated with the internal commitment of forces? Further, why was so little time provided for military leaders, executing the orders, to plan, prepare and train the forces specifically for the operation to ensure risks of failure were at the absolute minimum? From a regional perspective, why has Russia committed forces in regional conflicts under the name of peacekeeping when first there is not a peace to keep, and second, commitment of peacekeepers is without the consent of all conflicting parties? These developments have served to underscore Russia's propensity to use force to maintain control internal to her borders and dominance in the region.

#### National Interests

From Moscow's view, there are at least four reasons why Russian can not tolerate Chechen independence. First, the preservation of Russian's territorial integrity is at stake. Second is the potential for the collapse of Russia's position in the Caucasus. Third, the likely increase of Islamic influence in the Caucasus would bring the Islamic world closer to Russia. This could result in the encouragement of Russian Muslim minorities to proclaim self-determination in the name of cultural or

religious autonomy. Fourth, there is the potential for the loss of control over Chechnya's oil resources and a planned pipeline that will link oil from Kazakhstan to the Black Sea. The primary stated reason for intervention was the first: "to disarm the illegal armed formations on the territory of the Russian Federation and prevent threats to the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation."<sup>25</sup>

Strategically, Russian objectives in the Caucasus continue to be important. Control over the Transcaucasus creates a buffer zone between Russia and her traditional adversaries, Turkey and Iran, thus providing an element of southern flank security. Russian control of the Transcaucasus depends greatly on her relations with Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, but keeping Russian control over the Transcaucasus proper and free of outside influence is of little value without maintaining control over the North Caucasus. Any Russian withdrawal from the North Caucasus could lead to the loss of the grain lands of the Kuban and Stavropol Kray. It could also lead to reduced access to the eastern seaboard of the Black Sea. Control provides access to raw materials in the Caucasus region to include oil resource potential in Azerbaijan, the Caspian sea, and delivery of oil and gas from Central Asia. Russia would also lose control over the development of pipelines westward via Chechnya for the transfer of oil and gas from Central Asia, Baku and the Caspian Sea.<sup>26</sup> Chechnya itself is one of the richest oil producing regions in the Former Soviet Union and has vital natural gas resources. Simply put, many profess that the war in Chechnya is about oil.<sup>27</sup>

Chechnya is also about countering regional autonomism. Historically, the Chechens resisted both Imperial and Communist Russian rule and have fought for independence for over 200 years. Through generations, a deep sense of individualism, a spirit of independence, hostility to all forms of regimentation, and an immense hatred for the Russians have developed.<sup>28</sup> Nationalism is extremely profound in a society willing to sacrifice everything regardless of how long it takes to achieve recognized independence from Russia. In a March 1995 interview with a Kuwaiti newspaper journalist, Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev stated: "They [the Chechens] will undoubtedly

achieve final victory, irrespective of how long the fighting will continue, because they are defending their cause. They swore by the Koran to sacrifice their blood to safeguard the independence of their country..... The war will continue for a long time and will extend to all parts of the Caucasus..... We are prepared for a long war. This is not unusual for us, since our confrontation with the Russians has been going on for the past 300 years."<sup>29</sup>

For the Russians, however, conceding to Chechen independence would only increase the growth of separatism that could result in the eventual breakup of the Federation itself. Thus, the decision to use military force demonstrated Russia's resolve not to risk the integrity of the Federation and sent a strong signal to the other 20 autonomous republics to realize the costs associated with initiating similar separatist actions. In addition to preserving Russian integrity, other reasons raised by analysts for intervention are tied to President Yeltsin's enhancement of political stature, providing justification to increase the defense budget, and overcoming internal political disaffection.<sup>30</sup>

#### Decision To Use Internal Force

Much has been written on the reasons for the commitment of Russia's Armed Forces into Chechnya. Some analysts and Russian leaders perceived the intervention as illegal. Whether the commitment of troops into Chechnya was technically legal or not may be secondary to the issue that Russia has no significant legitimate means of civilian control over the use of force internal or external to her borders. President Yeltsin committed the troops into Chechnya without contacting either level of the parliament. There was no apparent consideration concerning the public, the military, or the parliament response to his decision. He may have consulted, in secrecy, several of his closest subordinates who seemingly gave him bad advice. The decision was, however, autocratic and he alone bears the responsibility. An essay published by the US Strategic Studies Institute analyzing the provisions of the current drafts on the Law of Defense and Law on Peacemaking indicates the power



of the President to control the Armed Forces has increased.<sup>31</sup> "Yeltsin's 'civilian' control is to be exercised by direct personal and vertical subordination on the basis of political loyalty, not subordination by statute."<sup>32</sup> This is one critical area where Russia is not on a path headed for democracy. The key issue is the President's ability to arbitrarily commit forces without being accountable to anyone for his actions. One report stated that: "Yeltsin's own cabinet ministers openly warn that Yeltsin's unilateral actions are leading directly to military dictatorship."<sup>33</sup>

The Military Doctrine states: "The Russian Federation ensures its military security by means of all the means [sic] at its disposal *with priority* accorded to political, diplomatic, and other peaceful means (my emphasis)."<sup>34</sup> Russia's extent of efforts to achieve a realistic peaceful, democratic solution to the Chechnya problem after it broke away and claimed independence from the Russian Federation in 1991 is questionable. Russia's four unsuccessful covert operations against Chechnya between 1992 and 1994 and the invasion itself indicate that use of force prevails as the preferred option to settle conflict. The actions also testify to the remarkable lack of ability on the part of Russia to solve problems politically.<sup>35</sup> One poll of servicemen of the Ministry of Internal Affairs showed that many believed that all methods of reaching a political settlement to the conflict were not employed and consequently, the use of troops was inadvisable.<sup>36</sup> In an article by Dmitriy Volkogonov, State Duma deputy and member of the President's Council, stated: "The question of whether or not all peaceful methods were exhausted would appear to be legitimate."<sup>37</sup> Some believe the war could have been prevented if "carefully measured political and financial pressure"<sup>38</sup> had been exerted on Chechnya earlier. Some influential government elites, however, clearly did not like the prospect of a peaceful solution to Chechnya as it would have produced some form of legal partnership between Moscow and Chechnya.<sup>39</sup> Any perception of using force hastily without expending all efforts to settle conflict peacefully discredits the doctrine. From the perspective of border states and CIS

members, the tendency to use force also increases the risk of the President opting the use of force in the 'near abroad' to achieve or maintain hegemony in the region.

The failure of the Armed Forces, coupled with the adverse reaction of the parliament and Russian citizens, suggests Yeltsin did not fully consider many aspects concerning the decision to commit forces into Chechnya. Complete assessments seemed to be lacking on the Russian force's capability to react quickly and decisively and of Chechen capability, to include their will to fight. It also appears that little analysis was given to what the outcome should be and relevant risks involved. The result of the Chechen Campaign suggests little consideration was given concerning the level of support for the President's decision by key leaders, advisors, parliament, and the public. Russian military doctrine and other laws pertaining to the overall security concept lack adequate descriptions of a decision-making process that take into consideration these issues prior to the commitment of the armed forces. The Armed Forces performance in Chechnya demonstrated a gross underestimation of the threat, the armed forces' capability to accomplish the mission, and the political reaction of the parliament, military, and population. The military operation was conducted by poorly briefed officers leading untrained, teen-aged conscripts in non-combat ready units under inadequate rules of engagement against aggressive, well-trained armed formations possessing a will to fight.<sup>40</sup> In January 1995, Colonel General Boris Gromov, Deputy Minister of Defense, comparing the adoption of the decision concerning force commitments to Afghanistan with that of Chechnya stated: "There are tragic coincidences: the same spontaneous approach, the same secrecy, the procrastination when it came to political and economic actions, and the substitution for them of military actions." <sup>41</sup>

Apart from the legality issue, many perceived the decision as being hasty, preventing those who were charged to implement the action from proper planning and preparation. The "illegal government" of Chechnya was allowed to continue for three years. President Yeltsin failed to negotiate successfully for an acceptable solution, allowed Chechnya to become the center for

terrorist, criminals and drug lords, withdrew troops, and allowed Dudayev to acquire the military arsenal left behind. This begs the question, why now and not sooner? Leonid V. Smisnyagin, a member of Yeltsin's Presidential Council argued that the timing was right, inferring the conditions for intervention were better than two years prior.<sup>42</sup> Stabilization was more assured with the signing of treaties with Muslim regions reducing the likelihood of their aggressive participation in support of the Chechens. Georgia had agreed not to allow arms entry through her territory in support of Dudayev's efforts, the Chechnya economy collapsed, and Dudayev's popularity was on the decline. Also, Yeltsin was assured the military operation would be easy.<sup>43</sup> Ironically, specialists on the Armed Forces General Staff tried to convince Yeltsin the forces were not prepared. In addition, eleven generals, including the Commander of the Military Council of Ground Forces, appealed to the Duma, stating Russian Forces were not combat ready for the operation.<sup>44</sup> The Ministry of Defense did not receive the appeal and subsequently publicly stated that Grozny could be captured in two hours with one airborne regiment.<sup>45</sup> The Chechnya decision showed an inclination for the President to exercise centralized control over the military. Lack of complete assessments on force capabilities and failure to weigh all alternatives to the use of force suggest a rash decision was made. These factors, coupled with the failure to conduct long range planning and preparation, support tendencies to resort to force as a means to maintain order.

#### Use of Force - Chechnya

The Armed Forces mission in Chechnya was initially to seal off Grozny, eliminate the illegal armed formation, and hand over responsibility of the area to The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD). The MVD tasks included disarming illegal formations, protecting the population from extremism, creating conditions for the stabilization of the socio-political situation and restoring constitutionality, law and order and the economy of Chechnya.<sup>46</sup> What the Armed Forces have ended up doing is low

intensity conflict consisting of military operations conducted in built up areas to include offense and defense actions in attempts to eliminate the illegal armed formations. The city has not been effectively sealed and the battle continues. As a result, the second stage to include the hand over to the MVD has yet to occur. The MVD on the other hand continues to conduct tasks beyond their normal tasks of guarding borders and quelling internal disturbances.

The military has been vehemently opposed to conducting operations internal to the state borders resulting in increased contention within the ranks. Colonel-General Boris Gromov, deputy minister of defense, stated in a January 1995 interview: "The Army should not be performing police or gendarme functions--this is not its 'profession'... In addition, the Army's intervention in domestic political showdowns has not once produced positive results; it has only intensified the crisis."<sup>47</sup> The Armed Forces and 'other troops' have experienced significant problems with conducting combined operations at all echelons in Chechnya. Dr. Pavel Felgenhauer, a well-known Russian military analyst, delivered a presentation on the Chechen Campaign in November 1995. He described the difficulty of regular forces and 'other troops' fighting together causing operational and tactical failures while giving Chechens motivation to increase their resistance: "Even during the fighting, the government agencies involved, including the Defense and Interior ministries, simply could not work together, which naturally increased the campaign's casualties. Commanders of Army and Interior ministry units constantly quarreled with one another, and soldiers even shot at one another. This lack of coordination bolstered the Chechen resistance."<sup>48</sup> In addition, he remarked that Army generals wanted the Interior Ministry forces to take on more responsibility for the fighting. They resented being sent into battle with the Chechens while "the forces of the Interior and Emergency Situations ministries remained in the rear counting their pay."<sup>49</sup> Reports of Interior Troops having priority for new equipment and other types of support at the expense of Army soldiers fighting in the first echelon have increased tension between the forces.<sup>50</sup> Although the doctrine dictates that the Armed Forces

will fulfill this role, Chechnya has shown that their lack of commitment and cooperation has had adverse impacts on achieving success.

The use of regular force conscripts in Chechnya has been a significant problem for the military. It is unrealistic to believe that conscripts can be fully relied upon to fulfill this internal role. Their loyalties, commitments, and military ethics can not be expected to equal that of contract soldiers. Some indicators of this include soldiers refusing to fight and trading equipment, arms and ammunition out of need for food, gaining dollars from black marketing, or in opposition to the state's intervention in the area. Although contract soldiers also lack discipline and are not well trained, their potential to achieve success in this role may be greater as part of a professional army. This resentment will likely increase with the retention of the conscription laws that place conscripts in a position to conduct operations against indigenous populations.

Russia's actions in Chechnya have been viewed as an attempt to serve as a warning to potential challengers of the Russian Federation that the military is prepared and capable of performing this internal role. What the Armed Forces have demonstrated is they can partially fulfill the role at great cost in personnel and equipment. Although a cease-fire has been announced by President Yeltsin, fighting continues and the initial tasks to disarm illegal formations, protect the population, and stabilize the situation have yet to be achieved. This serves to only strengthen cohesion within Chechen forces and increase potential for other separatist factions to make their move for independence.<sup>51</sup> The Armed Forces' performance record in Chechnya suggests that Gromov's statement is valid regarding the misuse of regular troops to enforce internal stability.

Many consequences have resulted from Yeltsin's decision to commit forces. These include Yeltsin's damaged relationship with reformist groups, the alienation of the military, increased credibility of nationalist extremists, increased opposition against Yeltsin, reduced confidence in democratic institutions, and a population which was 60 percent or more against the decision to

intervene.<sup>52</sup> In addition, thousands of lives, both military and civilian, and billions of rubles have been lost as a result of the decision.

On an international level, President Yeltsin's commitment of forces was implemented without his notification of the massing of troops to signatories of the Vienna Document.<sup>53</sup> As the CFE November 95 deadline approached regarding a specified limitation of troops and equipment in the North Caucasus area, Russia additionally violated the CFE treaty. Although the west has been sympathetic to Russia's situation in the area, her credibility continues to be in jeopardy as a trend to violate international agreements in the interests of Russia continues. The West has considered Chechnya an internal matter for Russia. However, many people view the situation escalated to an international issue when the gross violation of human rights occurred with the bombing of civilians in Grozny. "This was the first time since 1937 that an air force of a European power destroyed a city in its own territory."<sup>54</sup> This infers that Russia may not only hastily commit Armed Forces to protect her interests, but is likely to do so with excessive force and disregard to internationally recognized standards and agreements. The willingness to do this is clearly indicative of just how important enforced sovereignty and regional control are to Russia.

#### Use of Force - 'Near Abroad'

Russian Doctrine states that the Federation and other CIS states may require deployment of forces and equipment outside the borders of the state. It further states this would only be achieved in accordance with appropriate international documents to include mutual agreement between both sides. This implicitly includes peacekeeping activities. Formal documents exist covering all the Russian Federation Troop deployments in the CIS, although the agreement concerning the 14th Army in Moldova and their withdraw was only recently signed. The 1995 Document on Global Exchange of Military Information indicates a total of 71,638 Russian Federation troops, not including

peacekeeping forces, located outside the borders of Russia in the Commonwealth of Independent states.<sup>55</sup>

The manner in which the commitment of forces to peacekeeping in the 'near abroad' indicates Russia will ignore international standards for sending troops on peacekeeping missions. "Russian peacekeeping doctrine does not consider consent to be a mission prerequisite."<sup>56</sup> Peacekeeping operations are initiated when Russian feels there is a threat to peace. Moldova's conflict over the Transdnestr region is one example. Shortly after Moldova declared independence in August of 1991, authorities of the Transdnestr region declared the formation of the Transdnestr Moldovan Republic (TMR).<sup>57</sup> The TMR was supported by personnel of the Russian 14th Army, garrisoned in the area since 1945. Although the suggestion of the 14th Army as a peacekeeping force was rejected, the 21 July '92 establishment of a CIS Peacekeeping Force was initiated with the 14th Army temporarily in control with orders to remain neutral.<sup>58</sup> A cease-fire was initiated and a buffer zone established without the signature of the TMR on the accord. In addition, "Russian doctrine views neutrality as useful, but not necessary."<sup>59</sup> There were no neutral forces employed to keep the peace and no other CIS participants. The Peacekeeping Force consisted of the 14th Army initially, replaced by five other Russian battalions, and two battalions from each of the conflicting sides. Of the four major Peacekeeping operations which Russia has involved herself in the 'near abroad' (South Ossetia, Moldova, Abkhazia and Tajikistan), only the Abkhazia agreement was signed by all of the conflicting parties. In three of the four operations, the conflicting sides participated in the peacekeeping force. In all cases, Russia has provided the majority of forces and thus continues to dominate these areas.<sup>60</sup>

Russia's external use of force is not analogous to the Chechen experience. However, there is a parallel that can be made when assessing Russia's inclination to use force to achieve political goals. These examples of Russia's use of the Armed Forces in the 'near abroad' demonstrate her willingness to violate internationally recognized standards, employing the Armed Forces as peacekeepers without

consent of conflicting parties and without neutrality. It illustrates Russia's propensity to use force to undermine the sovereignty of the former Soviet republics.

### CAPABILITY GAP

Operations in Chechnya have provided the military, the politicians, the people of Russia and the international community a profound awareness that the ability to protect the nation's vital interests has significantly diminished since the breakup of the Soviet Union. That is not to imply that Russia is totally incapable of effectively committing Armed Forces to protect vital interests. However, the breakup of the Soviet Union and continued decline of the military coupled with economic, political and social strife, greatly limits the country's ability to do so. Chechnya has magnified the awareness that there has been no effective reform of the Armed Forces. There are too many generals (twice as many as needed) and other high-ranking officers, too many divisions with an exaggerated strength (80 divisions with some units having only 30 per cent of their required strength), too many conscripts, not enough professional soldiers, and not enough civilian control of the army.<sup>61</sup> The Armed Forces' demonstrated performance in Chechnya, when assessed against the military doctrine's language of what the Armed Forces is expected to accomplish, reveals an apparent doctrine-capability gap. A gap that, by the most optimistic estimates, will probably take decades to close to a point where recognition as a major power could equal that which Russia achieved during the Cold War. Russia's observations of the coalition's success during the Gulf War further exemplified how much the Armed Forces have declined in performance and capability. It also raised the awareness of how drastically far behind the country is in preparing for the military's transition into the 21st Century. While other countries are experiencing a Revolution in Military Affairs, Russia is faced with preservation of the force that will consume what little resources there are available. What Russia is capable of achieving



in research, development, acquisition, and distribution will likely fall short of a Revolution in Military Affairs.<sup>62</sup>

### Force Commitments

The Russian Armed Forces total approximately 1,520,000 troops with the Army manned at approximately 670,000.<sup>63</sup> Russian troops deployed in the CIS total approximately 71,650 while peacekeeping operations within the 'near abroad' and Former Yugoslavia total approximately 10,500 troops not including the 16,000 border troops operating in Tajikistan.<sup>64</sup> Russia has in excess of 40,000 troops committed in Chechnya.<sup>65</sup> Also, the impacts of casualties, especially those which continue in Chechnya and Tajikistan coupled with the requirements to rotate troops in these operations, place an additional burden on the declining force structure. While these numbers may initially appear insignificant when assessed against an armed force numbering 1.5 million, the investment to Russia to maintain stability at home and in the 'near abroad' is extremely important.

### Manning

The new doctrine continues to envisage a transition to a mixed system of manning. The move to an all professional armed forces was rejected on grounds of cost.<sup>66</sup> Manning the force may prove to be a major challenge. Privates and sergeants make up an average of 64 percent of actual needs (384,000 shortage) of the Army and Navy forces.<sup>67</sup> A Rand Study conducted in 1994 indicated: "consensus among students of Russian military manpower is that the demographic base for attaining the armed forces of 1.5 million, as proposed by MoD, simply does not exist."<sup>68</sup> There are complaints that draft deferments are too lenient. The list of allowable call-up deferment has raised from 11 to 20, as determined by the law of the Russian Federation "On Military Duty and Military Service". Over 75 percent of citizens of call-up age and registered for military service are deferred.<sup>69</sup> Chechnya has

contributed to an increase in draft dodging. In 1989, a total of 2,800 persons evaded the draft in Russia compared to 28,000 after the 1995 spring draft.<sup>70</sup> Length of service has been extended to 18 months in "deployment" zones. Those drafted after 1 October 1995 will serve an obligation of 24 months. The manning-level of the Armed Forces is at approximately 77.5 percent which is significantly lower than the manning level of other forces.<sup>71</sup> The doctrine outlines the probability of the force being employed in Low Intensity Conflict. Yet, the force continues to be structured on traditional conventional force levels. However, many recognize the need for a smaller, more professional, mobile, capable force.

### Combat Readiness

One of the primary problems facing the Armed Forces is inability to maintain the current inventory to combat readiness standards. A significant portion of the existing weapons systems and equipment is likely to deteriorate as a result of spare parts shortages, skilled maintenance personnel and disrupted links in the defense industry.<sup>72</sup> Massive amounts of equipment are sitting in motor parks deteriorating. More than half of the existing fleet of the fixed and rotary wing aircraft in the Air Forces are old second and third generation systems. Only 20 percent of the 1995 level of aircraft will remain in the inventory by the year 2000 to 2005 as these older systems are decommissioned. A total of 32 fixed and rotary wing aircraft, of an annual requirement of 250-300, was procured in 1994. Requirements for spare parts are only being filled to 30-35 percent resulting in 50-70 percent grounded aircraft.<sup>73</sup>

Serious lack of training has had tremendous impacts on the force. What little training soldiers received during the past three to four years has been oriented on conducting large scale conventional warfare. Little attention has been paid to training infantry in independent actions under urban and mountainous conditions. The Military Journal 'Voyennaya Mysl' has not published any article of

practical significance on urban warfare during the 1980's or 1990's except for lessons learned from the American experience in the Gulf War.<sup>74</sup> Another Russian military expert, Sergey Grigoryev, stated in an article on low-intensity conflicts: "It must be asserted that the theories on the use of the army within the country in the 'Fundamentals of Military Doctrine' have remained mere words from the standpoint of training."<sup>75</sup> Whatever the lessons learned in the 10 year commitment in Afghanistan were, the demonstrated performance of forces in Chechnya suggests they were forgotten. This does not prepare soldiers for conducting low intensity conflict or peacekeeping operations. As people are leaving the Armed Forces through normal attrition,<sup>76</sup> the schools are unable to replace them. Schools can not provide the kind of training which allows them to take command of subunits right away. One of the major military problems identified resulting from poor performance in Chechnya is the critical weakness of the troops' junior command staff. The majority of sergeants failed to demonstrate the ability to organize battle and lead small units of soldiers and crews. The army has no effective institution of sergeants. There is no backbone that is directly related to discipline and order, caring for soldiers and small unit training for combat. The officer corps consequently takes on the heavy dual burden of commanding on its own behalf and that of the sergeants.<sup>77</sup>

Units also seriously lack combat training. Most units have not conducted serious combat training for four years. This differs from practice during the Afghanistan conflict where soldiers conducted six months of combat training followed by a month of specific preparatory training for Afghanistan. Chechnya units were pieced together on the fly, enroute to Chechnya with little knowledge as to mission, tasks and no collective training and thrown into the situation. Much of the infantry was provided by interior forces. Aviator training dropped to 43 hours of pilot training from the minimum of 100 hours to maintain proficiency.<sup>78</sup> Generally, forces have not trained to conduct low intensity conflict operations. The last manual published on how to fight was printed in 1981. "Even with

respect to Afghanistan, enormous experience won with blood and billions of dollars have sunk [sic] into oblivion."<sup>79</sup>

The quality of life is inadequate resulting from mandates to reduce forces, coupled with no plans for integrating military personnel and their families into Russian Society.<sup>80</sup> According to a report dated October 1995, more than 125,000 soldier's families are without housing and 40,000 are in need of improved housing. The report also indicated that 70,000 families of citizens no longer with the Armed Forces require relocation from closed and isolated installations.<sup>81</sup> Lack of pay, abysmal housing conditions, and lack of concern for the caring of families, results in soldiers more concerned about their families than with mission accomplishment.

#### Leadership and Discipline

There is a lack of discipline throughout the ranks only to be exacerbated by poor leadership. Coordination deficiencies started at the Ministry levels with lack of unity and cohesiveness between the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior Affairs.<sup>82</sup> The armed forces, the federal counterintelligence service and the ministry of internal affairs had no clear orders, lacked coordination, disagreed and lacked unity of effort. They basically did not have any focus on what it was they were supposed to accomplish collectively.<sup>83</sup> Leaders were not able to explain the tasks and reasons for performing them. In one survey, it was noted that two months into the operations in Chechnya, almost one in five soldiers did not know what the Russian Army was defending in Chechnya.<sup>84</sup> In addition, leaders could not articulate the situation, the objectives or the end state of operations, or what was being done regarding efforts to accomplish any goals. This resulted in autonomous, non-synchronized, uncoordinated, unrehearsed actions conducted by field commanders. In some cases, General officers refused to advance on Grozny while other Russian officers resigned in protest against the decision to commit forces against indigenous populations.<sup>85</sup> This lack of

leadership and cohesion was exacerbated with the replacement of officers who had been relieved for the lack of success.<sup>86</sup> Further, irrational violence occurred with leaders issuing orders to carry out huge air and artillery strikes against the city of Grozny.<sup>87</sup> In addition, officer ranks are increasing their involvement with politics. Politicization of the Army is on the increase and is in contravention to the doctrine: "to preclude, in accordance with legislation, the operation of political parties, organizations and associations in the Armed Forces and other troops of the Russian Federation, and propaganda of violence and war."<sup>88</sup> A January '95 article in a Moscow newspaper reported dozens of officers and generals serving in both houses of parliament. Generals have "infiltrated" in the staffs of the Prime Minister and Speaker of the Duma. There are approximately 14,000 people from the Defense and Internal Affairs Ministries who have been assigned to various posts and civilian structures.<sup>89</sup>

### Defense Budget

Russia, simply cannot afford the Armed Forces as it is currently structured. The lack of funding has impacted significantly on base operations, training, and maintaining the forces. The 1995 defense budget of 50.8 trillion rubles would not cover 35 percent of the real needs of the Armed Forces.<sup>90</sup> An interview with Colonel General Vorobyev, Chief of the Russian Federation Defense Ministry Main Military Budget and Finance Directorate in November 1995 revealed a draft federal budget for 1996 that allocated R78.9 trillion for defense. It included R77.1 trillion for the organizational development and upkeep of the Armed Forces and servicemen's pensions. This falls critically short of the R134 trillion required. Vorobyev also stated: "There is no provision at all for the upkeep of the grouping of forces in Chechnya. And that will cost R2.8 trillion."<sup>91</sup> This has been announced under the conditions of a 1995 debt and the outlook for future defense spending being less. The estimated cost to cover Russia's military operations for one month is one trillion rubles. A protracted guerrilla war

has been assessed of costing the state approximately 10 trillion rubles per year.<sup>92</sup> In October 1995, Lieutenant-General Naumov, commander of the group of federal troops in the Chechen republic, stated to Moscow's ITAR-TASS that this group of troops already owes more than 110 billion rubles to its suppliers and that the money was spent on food, fuel, lubricants and laundry needs.<sup>93</sup> The army of 64 divisions (of which 40 per cent are not combat ready) spread over eight military districts cannot be managed with such a lack of financing for long.

The combination of a lack of leadership, direction, training, financial and other resource support and failure in combat has resulted in a totally demoralized force. There was little warfighter spirit or warrior ethos demonstrated, accentuated with soldiers refusing to go into combat. Actions were slow and indecisive with obvious displays of unwillingness to fight.<sup>94</sup> Soldiers demonstrated lack of discipline, high levels of crime, corruption and black-marketing and in some incidents, sympathy with the local people.<sup>95</sup> Draft evasion is considered to be widespread. "Drunkenness, theft of weapons and military equipment by all ranks and general demoralization among the recruits and the professional officer corps have resulted in a military dangerous to itself and society"<sup>96</sup>

Given the overall poor condition of the Russian Federation Armed Forces, it has still been able to maintain some stability in the 'near abroad' while suppressing Chechnya's independence. Although, cease-fires may be fragile in the 'near abroad' and Chechnya fighting could potentially continue indefinitely, the Armed Forces have demonstrated that it is still more capable than any other in the region. Lack of reform in all areas of the military result in high prices paid in human lives, equipment and defense spending. Without reform, it is only a question of time before the Russian Federation Armed Forces experiences total collapse. If reform is achieved, the Armed Forces may slowly recover to a respectable level of proficiency. In the interim, great apprehension exists regarding the extent which Moscow can continue to expend resources on Chechnya type internal conflicts while simultaneously committing to additional Tajikistans in the 'near abroad'. Additional commitments

could send Russia spiraling into total social, economic and military collapse, resulting in the same outcome experienced by the former Soviet Union.

## IMPLICATIONS

Looking at the doctrine itself, there are several implications that could be drawn from Russia's demonstrated actions in Chechnya and the 'near abroad'. First, there is apprehension concerning Russia's compliance with the spirit of "ensuring military security by every means at its disposal with priority accorded to political, diplomatic and other peaceful means."<sup>97</sup> The demonstrated actions, when viewed from the perspective of Russia's propensity to use force to resolve internal crisis', would appear contradictory to the doctrine. Examples of aggression, suppression and intimidation by means of brutality traditional to Russia's past ways of dealing with internal domestic crisis' are evident. They include the hasty and excessive use of force in Chechnya, willingness to inflict high collateral damage and casualties on Russian populations, and conducting operations which result in the immediate violation of one international agreement followed by the additional violation of another. Considering these demonstrated actions, Russia appears to be taking two steps backwards from the democratic notions expressed in the doctrine.

From the peacekeeping perspective, Russia has neglected the language of the doctrine in two respects. First, Russia's actions in the 'near abroad' contradict the state's commitment on: "respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, noninterference in their internal affairs, inviolability of state borders, and other universally recognized principles of international law; [and] will not employ its Armed Forces or other troops against any state other than for individual or collective self-defense..."<sup>98</sup> Second, the doctrine is vague regarding conditions for the deployment of forces to conduct peacekeeping operations. It simply states in two sections that peacekeeping operations will be conducted by the decisions of the UN Security Council or in accordance with the Russian

Federation's international commitments. Grachev, providing an overview of military doctrine in a June 1994 article stated: "Russia firmly adheres to the generally accepted norms and principles of international law as well as the specific norms and rules for carrying out peacekeeping activity. The latter category includes: giving priority to political over military ways and means of settling a situation; strictly observing and protecting human rights; [and] using military contingents of peacemaking forces only with the consent of the opposing sides and with the approval of the international community."<sup>99</sup> Russia will likely continue to conduct UN peacekeeping operations under recognized international standards. However, in accordance with the Draft Law on Peacemaking, Russia is also likely to continue conducting peacemaking operations in accordance with her own standards which have displayed disregard for the sovereignty of CIS members. Her willingness to employ considerable military force, neglect impartiality, negotiate with one side while putting pressures on another, all suggest trends to dominate the local situation using political, economic, and military pressures to secure objectives in the CIS.<sup>100</sup>

Moscow has sent the message, as intended, to other states within the Federation that Russia will not hesitate to use force to maintain the integrity of the state or to gain and maintain regional hegemony. These actions strongly tend to reinforce analysts who assess the doctrine as being more offensively oriented and superficially lined with notions of democratic processes and standards. Finally, the doctrine is a transitional document, subject to supplements, adjustments and improvements as the statehood is established and new systems of international relations are formed.<sup>101</sup> Changes to the doctrine are likely to occur in the near future. However, based on demonstrated actions in Chechnya and the 'near abroad' it appears unlikely that changes to the document will reflect a less aggressive, offensive tone.

From an internal perspective, Russia will not tolerate secessionist attempts to break away from the Russian Federation. Forces will be committed to whatever extent is necessary to enforce



Russian's sovereignty and integrity. Republics with tendencies to seek independence and secede as Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Tatarstan will think twice before following Chechnya's example. Absence of legitimate, law-based, and coherent governmental institutions are likely to continue. Government and military corruption will worsen. Politicization of the military continues with no effective democratic civilian form of control. These conditions increase Russia's potential to continue using force as the primary means to achieve its internal political aims. Russian is also likely to continue to use force under the guise of peacekeeping to maintain regional hegemony. Although Russia has been able to maintain stability in three of the Former Soviet States, tension fluctuates and can increase in intensity as social, political, economic and military developments continue during Russia's transition. On the other hand, the situation in Tajikistan, where a much larger contingent of Russian Armed Forces are deployed, is fragile and could easily escalate requiring additional force commitments into the area. This could increase the potential for conflict to spread throughout the region. Russian peacekeeping is not accomplished by internationally accepted norms. Russia will continue to use belligerents in peacekeeping forces, unilaterally conduct Peacekeeping operations, or use force to assist one or both conflicting sides to serve her interests.

Russian can not afford her present military force structure. Military reform is imperative. Without successful reform, the security of the state is at great risk. The fragile condition of the Armed Forces suggests that the capability to conduct large-scale conventional operations would be significantly limited, but to what extent is questionable. The conventional force capability continues to decline rapidly, for "As conventional forces become less and less viable, Russian will rely more on its nuclear forces for deterrence and also to compel and support Russian objectives in Europe and Asia."<sup>102</sup>

Russia's Armed Forces' performance graphically demonstrated to the world that its combat effectiveness and control are in question. When the ministries cannot conduct joint efforts to quell

the resistance of the Chechen micro-state; when troops have to be brought into the conflict from as far as Khabarovsk to conduct operations in the North Caucasus; when high ranking deputy ministers of defense and general officers openly criticize their superior and soldiers of all ranks refuse to fight; when reform at best is carried on a chariot pulled by snails; when requirements greatly exceed the available resources; then forecasting anything other than a dismal future for Russian Military Forces would be extremely optimistic. The opportunity exists for Russia to "resurrect the army, not in the sense of a return to excessive militarization, but rather as a process of bringing the Armed Forces into conformity with the real requirements of the state."<sup>103</sup> Failing to achieve appropriate reforms in the Armed Forces will not only increase the doctrine-capability gap, but could eventually result in the collapse of the military.

Taking into consideration the external sources of the threat outlined in the military doctrine, it would be prudent for Russia to focus on the main effort of addressing regional and internal threats. As conventional force capability decreases, opportunity may exist for Russia to increase its capability to conduct low intensity conflict operations. The maintenance of a force capable of successfully conducting peacekeeping operations and suppressing internal domestic conflicts requires significantly fewer resources than maintenance of a large, robust, conventional force. Russia recognizes the need to reduce the force and develop a smaller, more capable, modern, and mobile force. However, as Russia struggles with military reform in the midst of social, economic, and political challenges, her capability to conduct operations internal to her borders and the 'near abroad' remain limited. Even in view of the ongoing manning problems, Russia could likely provide the manpower to commit to additional low intensity conflicts or peacekeeping operations. What seriously limits Russia's military capability is the lack of financial resources, an efficient, effective force structure, an ability to procure and maintain equipment, training, and effective leadership. In that regard, Russia may have already

reached the maximum capability to continue operations in Chechnya while simultaneously conducting five Peacekeeping operations.

In the meantime, Russia will be faced with three alternatives to deal with potential future conflicts, both internal and external to her borders. First, Russia could settle for a peaceful solution that may result in accepting more concessions than she has been willing to accept in the past. Second, Moscow could do nothing and allow the conflict to take its course resulting in one side winning over the other or, as in the case of Nargorno-Karabakh, conflicting sides reach a peak of exhaustion and war-weariness ending in a stalemate, thus creating a more stabilized situation. Third, Russia could continue to commit forces to forcibly stabilize the situation at the expense of tapping national resources until the well runs dry. Trends over the past few years indicate a propensity for Russia to select the latter of the three options over the others. It would be very difficult to predict how long Russia's social, political, economic, and military institutions can tolerate continued force commitments before experiencing total collapse. Likewise, predicting when or if Russia will change trends toward the first alternative is also difficult to foresee. There is potential that the first alternative will become the only course of action available to ensure the preservation of the state.

There is little mention in the military doctrine that implies a faint notion of achieving increased civilian control over the military. However, it is blatantly contradicted by President Yeltsin's individual power and authority to commit forces with no accountability to the state, parliament, or anyone else. "The inclination of the president to monopolize control over the army and a reliance on power methods of a resolution of domestic political problems and a disregard for the legal standards are making the president himself increasingly dependent on the armed forces and entailing the political leadership's loss of control over the army."<sup>104</sup> Extremely centralized decisions regarding force commitments into Chechnya and the 'near abroad' suggest that this method will continue with trends

of moving away from more democratic processes to develop a check and balances system designed to prevent arbitrary, excessive use of force to achieve political goals.

Internationally, several implications may be drawn based on Russia's demonstrated actions in Chechnya and the 'near abroad'. First, Russia violated the Vienna Document and additionally violated the CFE Treaty. Although this is viewed as an indication of how important the integrity of the state is to Moscow, as what kind of precedent should it be viewed? Is this a one-time excusable violation? What is the likelihood of other agreement violations? To what extent can agreements and treaties be violated before they lose their purpose? To what extent will Russia continue to ignore agreements under the premise that it no longer supports her interests? To what extent do the other signatories tolerate the violations? These questions have yet to be answered. However, continued trends in this direction can only decrease the reliability of Russia as an international partner, increase international tension and work against efforts to gain stronger cohesion in the 'near abroad'. The demonstrated performance of the Armed Forces and the Kremlin's inability to control it would seem to fill the international community with skepticism regarding the state's credibility to fulfill international obligations. Further, actions in Chechnya and the near abroad also would put into question just how much is Russia moving toward democracy and observance of human rights. Decisions to ignore the protests and views of the state's majority of the population against operations in Chechnya demonstrating no semblance of civilian control over the military or separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches, suggest a move in the opposite direction. Can a state who ignores these things become a reliable partner in international affairs? Is Russia a quasi-democratic state struggling toward a mature state that is more autocratic than democratic or vice-versa? Until the questions are answered it is doubtful that Russia will be treated as an equal in international affairs.

Russia will continue to confront this problem of balancing the use force with the capability of the force to achieve success. The prospects do not appear very encouraging as additional Chechnya's and

Tajikistan's are likely to appear as the country continues to crumble. How Moscow reacts to these likely future conflicts will link directly to her survival as an emerging democratic state. Successful reform of the military, coupled with any significant improved capability to respond to political, social, or economic pressures without the use of force may allow, in time, positive recovery for Russia. This would also bring Russia's actions more in line with the democratic notions of the military doctrine. If Russia continues to "employ every means available at its disposal to undermine the sovereignty of breakaway former Soviet republics, not to mention Chechnya, [then] over the next decade, Moscow is likely to face increasing resistance from the republics themselves and from the West."<sup>105</sup> Inevitably, this will result in an increased rivalry and escalation of tension between Russia and the former Soviet republics that could end with the collapse of the Russian Federation.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> In the references used to develop this paper, all sources that referred to the 'near abroad' was referring to the former states of the Soviet Union.

<sup>2</sup> "Detailed Account of 'The Basic Provisions of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation': 'Russia's Military Doctrine,'" Rossiyskiye Vesti, (in Russian) 18 November 1993, pp. 1,2. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, FBIS-SOV-92-222-S, 19 November 1992, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

<sup>4</sup> James F. Holcomb and Michael M. Boll, Russia's New Doctrine: Two Views (Carlisle Barracks, Pa: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, July 20, 1994), p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> James H. Slagle, "New Russian Military Doctrine: Sign of the Times," Parameters vol. XXIV, no.1 (Spring 1994): 88-99, 89.

<sup>6</sup> "The Basic Provisions of the Military Doctrine," p.1

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> C. J. Dick, Initial Thoughts On Russia's Draft Military Doctrine And Russia's Draft Military Doctrine, 10 Months On (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and Sandhurst, England: Foreign Military Studies Office, Royal Military Academy Soviet Studies Research Centre, July 1992 and April 1993), p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> "The Basic Provisions of the Military Doctrine," pp. 4,10.

- <sup>10</sup> Charles Dick, "The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation," Jane's Intelligence Review, Special Report No. 1, (January 1994): 1-5, 2,4.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., 1-5, 3.
- <sup>12</sup> S. Neil MacFarlane, The CIS and Regional Security, (Kingston, Canada: Queen's University, Centre for International Relations, undated), unpagged.
- <sup>13</sup> "The Basic Provisions of the Military Doctrine," p. 3.
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- <sup>20</sup> Grachev, "Military Doctrine and Russia's Security..," p. 25.
- <sup>21</sup> A.V. Vakhrameyev: "On the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation," Novaya Rossiya: Informatsionno-Statisticheskii Almanakh (in Russian), 1994, pp. 73-77. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Central Eurasia Military Affairs, JPRS-UMA-95-008, 28 February 1995, p. 13.
- <sup>22</sup> Sergey Knyazkov, "This 'Hot Spot' Is Hottest of All," Moscow Krasnaya Zvezda (in Russian), 25 January 1995, p. 1. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Central Eurasia Military Affairs, JPRS-UMA-95-003, 31 January 1995, p. 13.
- <sup>23</sup> "The Basic Provisions of the Military Doctrine," p. 6.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 7.
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- <sup>30</sup> Stephen J. Blank and Earl H. Tilford, Jr., Russia's Invasion of Chechnya: A Preliminary Assessment (Carlisle Barracks, Pa: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, January 13, 1995), p. 11.

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- <sup>53</sup> Blank and Tilford, Jr., Russia's Invasion of Chechnya: A Preliminary Assessment, pp. 14,15.
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